CHURCH HISTORY

Chapter 38 – Religious Life in Germany and England

1. *Doctrinal Differences in the Lutheran Church*
    a. *Philipp Melanchthon had from the very beginning of the Reformation movement been Luther's closest friend and helper. But he also became acquainted with Zwingli; and with Calvin he formed a warm friendship. In course of time he came to disagree with Luther on certain points of doctrine. As long as Luther lived he kept these ideas to himself. After Luther's death, however, he allowed his views to become known, with the result that the first considerable controversy among Lutherans arose.*
2. *Deism*
    a. *The prevailing influence in English religious life during the eighteenth century was Deism. The hopes of the Presbyterians in the seventeenth century to make their faith the state religion turned out to be only a passing dream. In the course of the eighteenth century the Trinity-denying Socinians gained the upper hand in the Presbyterian churches. Those who embraced Socinian views left the Presbyterian Church and organized Unitarian churches. Presbyterianism ceased to be an important factor in England*
    b. *The Deists do believe in the existence of God, and they believe that He made the world. But they think that God's relation to the world is like that of a watchmaker to a watch. A watchmaker makes a watch and winds it, and then the watch runs by itself. So God made the world, a most marvelous piece of mechanism, and now has nothing more to do with it. It runs by itself according to certain laws, the laws of nature.*
    c. *Denies miracles, the atoning work of Christ, and the regenerating work of the Spirit; discredits the Bible and robs religion of its supernatural character; morality, or sense of right and wrong, is of a low order*
3. *A Low, a High, and a Broad Church Movement*
    a. *Whitefield's followers who remained in the Anglican Church, formed the* Low Church or Evangelical party
    b. *Many leaders in the Anglican Church became frantic with alarm of the increase of dissenters. A number of them met to consider what could be done to stop this trend. They and their supporters became known as the* High Church party
    c. *The High Church party emphasized those features in the Church of England which were a continuation of Roman Catholic tradition and practice (most of the adherents are from Oxford University and thus was also called the* Oxford Movement*)*
    d. *A* Broad Church party *also arose in the Church of England. The Broad Church party strongly believed in having a State Church. Members of this party considered the Church to be a department of the State, like the army and the navy. Believing as they do in a State Church they would like to see every citizen a member of it. In order that this may be possible they wish to see every form of belief tolerated in the State Church. There should be no creeds with binding force. Everyone should be free to believe whatever he pleases. That is why this group is called the Broad Church party.*
4. *Three Nonconformist Movements Arise*
    a. *Step by step during the nineteenth century the Nonconformist or Dissenting bodies in England achieved more nearly a status of equality with the Episcopal or Anglican Church*
    b. *The first of these movements began when Edward Irving, a Presbyterian minister, began to preach that the gifts of the apostolic age (speaking in tongues, prophesying, and healing the sick) would be restored if people only had enough faith - took the name of the* Catholic Apostolic Church *and adopted an elaborate ritual. This Church expected the speedy return of the Lord. The last apostle died in 1901 but the Apostolic Church carries on to this day*
    c. *A second movement arose as a reaction against the lack of spirituality and warmth in the Anglican Church. Groups of Brethren sprang up in Ireland and western England. They claimed faith and Christian love to be their only bonds of union - The great increase in the number of Brethren was due to the labors of John Nelson Darby, who had been a minister in the neighborhood of Plymouth, England. Because of him the Brethren received the name of* Darbyites or Plymouth Brethren*; Because the Bible teaches that all believers are priests, the Brethren do not believe in ordained ministers. They are against creeds. They hold that the Holy Spirit guides all true believers and unites them in faith and worship after the apostolic model. They claim to reject all denominationalism - One of the outstanding members of the early Brethren group in England was* George Muller *of Bristol*
    d. *A third movement, the* Salvation Army*, was founded by William Booth, a former Methodist minister. The Salvation Army engages in street preaching and in works of mercy. It is not a church. In almost every city it maintains a service center, where the lonely and homeless can find help and where evangelistic services are regularly held.*